

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs Meeting
January 8, 2020 beginning at 10:00 a.m.
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum
7105 – NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, IA 50313-1824

Present: Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair
Orene Cressler
Steve Hyde
Darlene McMartin
Mary Van Horn
Carol Whitmore
Chuck Connors
Dan Gannon
Kenny Lloyd
Greg Paulline
Gary Wattnem

Staff: Karl Lettow, Public Information, IDVA
Mari Mielke, IDVA – Recording Secretary
Tim Oujiri, IVH Commandant

Guests/ Rich Witt, American Legion
Presenters: Patty Hamann, Cedar County VSO
Harold Christ, VVA
R. Bruce Beeston, VVA
Ronald Healey, VVA
Doug Maccrion, American Legion
George Mosley, SOS
Ray Meylor, Veterans in Agriculture
Jim Peterson, American Legion
Nick Praska, Dallas County VSO
Pat Sweeney, Polk County VSO
Chad Christensen, VARO
Dave Allen, Sen. Grassley’s Office
David Thornburg, DAV
Amy Muse, American Legion
Harry Rossander, Montgomery County VSO
Erin Rewerts, Story County VSO
Christine Oliver, Wright County VSO
Nick Lucy, American Legion
Gail Graham, Central Iowa VA Director
Mysty Stumbo, SOS
John Derner, American Legion
Brian Ring, American Legion
James Kessler, American Legion
Kristi Catrenich, VARO
Bruce Voigt, VARO
Brenda Safranski, Sen. Ernst Office
Judy Johnson-Mekota

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE ‘UNAPPROVED’ UNTIL ACCEPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT THE NEXT MEETING.

APPROVED: Elizabeth Ledvina Date: 7/1/220
Elizabeth Ledvina, Chair, Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs

Call to Order:

Chairperson Ledvina called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence:

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chairperson Ledvina followed by a moment of silence for our departed veterans, POWs, those missing in action (MIAs) and those on active duty at this time.

Roll Call:

Recording Secretary took roll call and all members were present. IDVA Executive Director Lukan was not available for the meeting.

Welcome/Introductions of Guests:

All members of the audience introduced themselves.

VA Regional Office Update

Regional Office Director Bruce Voigt gave an oral update and gave a handout on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act 2019.

Iowa City VA Medical Centers Update

Director Judith Johnson-Mekota gave an oral update.

Des Moines VA Medical Center Update

Director Gail Graham gave an oral update.

IVH Update

The September US News and World Report graded the Iowa Veterans Home in the top 10 of long term care facilities in the US. Making IVH a smoke-free environment is an ongoing issue and we will continue working on it; as IVH staff is required. Lengthy discussion took place regarding the "No Smoking" "Smoke-free Environment" that was supposed to be effective January 1, 2020.

IDVA Office Update

No update provided.

Approval of Commission Minutes:

Commissioner Van Horn made a motion to approve the minutes from the quarterly Commission meeting on October 2, 2019 and was seconded by Commissioner Gannon. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to approve the Trust Fund meeting minutes of October 3, 2019 and Commissioner Cressler seconded the motion. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner McMartin made a motion to approve the Trust Fund meeting minutes of November 7, 2019 and was seconded by Commissioner Lloyd. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Commissioner Connors made a motion to approve the Trust Fund meeting minutes of December 5, 2019 and was seconded by Commissioner Hyde. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Old Business

Application for Project Assistance using License Plate Fund Monies

Discussion of the application for Project Assistance using the License Plate Fund monies was distributed by Commissioner McMartin. After lengthy discussion of how and what uses the application can be submitted and what types of projects, and minor changes to the application, Commissioner Gannon made a motion to approve the application and move forward with it getting on IDVAs website. Commissioner Cressler seconded the motion. The motion carried; approved unanimously.

New Business

ARNG Warrior Family Services – Survivor Outreach Services (SOS)

Col. George Mosley thanked the Commission for their past support of the Survivor Outreach Services program. He distributed a current SOS brochure and a written report of how the Veterans Trust Fund has helped support these programs in the past, since federal funding ceased 4-5 years ago. At the time, General Orr came to the Commission asking if there was any means the Commission could help support the programs that the Warrior Family Services can continue to support the Survivor Outreach services.

SOS is requesting up to \$29,000 for 2020 projects and events showing on the itemized breakdown that was submitted to the Commission. After discussion Commissioner Wattnem made a motion to continue supporting SOS events/programs using the Veterans Trust Fund. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Horn. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

IVH Request for License Plate Fund Monies

Commandant Oujiri is requesting \$17,000 for the Iowa Veterans Home for the Music Program, Education/Training programs, and Activities for all the veterans at IVH. These are items that cannot be purchases out of our operating budget. The Commandant distributed an outline of the itemized costs for these programs to the Commission members. After discussion of the request, Commissioner Whitmore made a motion to approve the request and was seconded by Commissioner Connors. Motion carried; approved unanimously.

Veterans Day at the Capitol on January

Karl Lettow briefed the Commission about the Program Agenda for the day's event on January 22, 2020 beginning at 10:00 a.m. There are 20 vendor tables registered that will be available to browse beginning at 9:00 a.m. Looking forward to a great event and hope for good weather.

2020 Legislative Initiatives

After a lengthy discussion of the individual Commission members' organizations suggestions for the Legislative Initiatives and Awareness issues, Commissioner Hyde made a motion to approve the priorities proposed by and agreed to support by all Commission members. Commissioner Wattnem seconded the motion; motion carried; approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Audience discussion regarding the different veterans organizations uniting as one at the Veterans Day at the Capitol event with the agreed upon Legislative Initiatives just approved by the Commission.

Next Commission meeting

The next quarterly Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 1, beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Iowa Veterans Home in the Malloy Leisure Recreation Center in Marshalltown.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.